

# Development of International Cancer Research Partnerships Through the NCI US-Latin American-Caribbean HIV/HPV-Cancer Prevention Clinical Trials Network (ULACNet)

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## **Purpose**

Persons living with HIV have elevated risks of HPV-related cervical, anogenital, and oropharyngeal cancers. Yet, research on optimization and implementation of prevention interventions (prophylactic HPV vaccination, cervical and anogenital cancer screening and triage, and precancer therapeutics) for HPV-related cancers among persons living with HIV has been limited.

With a goal to expand this evidence and to build on strong academic research partnerships developed for HIV research between institutions in the US and the Latin American and the Caribbean (LAC) region, the US National Cancer Institute (NCI) initiated ULACNet as a new international collaborative clinical trials network.

### **Methods**

NCI inaugurated ULACNet in 2019 as three U54 Cooperative Agreement mechanism-funded Partnership Centers each led by US-based institutions (University of California-San Francisco, Weill Medical College of Cornell University, and Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center), working collaboratively with several US and LAC institutions and with the NCI to develop and conduct multicenter clinical trials focused on filling key scientific gaps and evaluating novel interventions for prevention of HPV-related cancers in persons with HIV.

#### **ULACNet Clinical Trials Oversight Committee ULACNet Partnership Center Coordinating Committee Cross-Partnership NCI Offices/Contractors Center Working Groups CAMPO ROCCHHA HPV Testing and NCI Office of** Screening **UCSF** Grants Cornell Partnership Center **Working Group Administration** Partnership Center **NCI Division of Cancer NCI DCP Precancer** Prevention **Protocol ULACNet Management Treatment** Information Unit **Working Group** Office **Regulatory and Colaboración Evita** Recruitment Auditing Fred Hutch Partnership and Retention Support **Working Group** Contractor

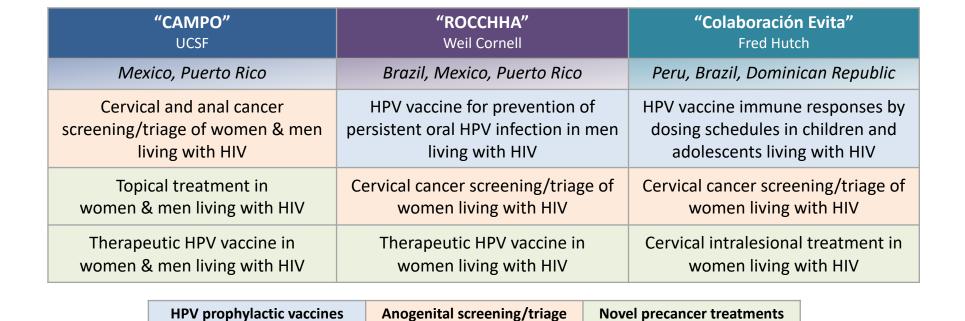
Figure 2. Organizational Structure of ULACNet Program

## Results

ULACNet encompasses six countries (US, Mexico, Puerto Rico, Brazil, Peru, and Dominican Republic), twenty partner institutions, and over 100 collaborating scientific investigators, clinical and public health practitioners, research staff, and patient advocates.

ULACNet is working to collaboratively develop and conduct nine prevention clinical trials (two prophylactic HPV vaccine trials in adults and perinatally-HIV infected adolescents, three trials for clinical validation of molecular biomarkers and imaging technologies for screening and triage, two candidate HPV therapeutic vaccine trials, and two trials of intralesional/topical therapeutic agents).

Facilitation across network partners is being achieved via a Partnership Center Coordinating Committee and three cross-Partnership Center Working Groups (focused on HPV testing and screening, precancer treatment, and recruitment and retention activities). NCI provides scientific and programmatic oversight through a Clinical Trials Oversight Committee.



**Figure 3.** Clinical Trials by Focus Areas in ULACNet

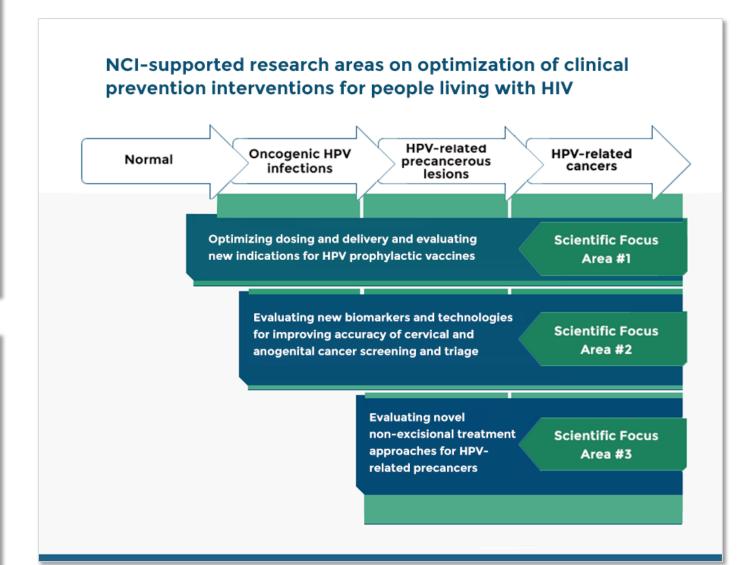
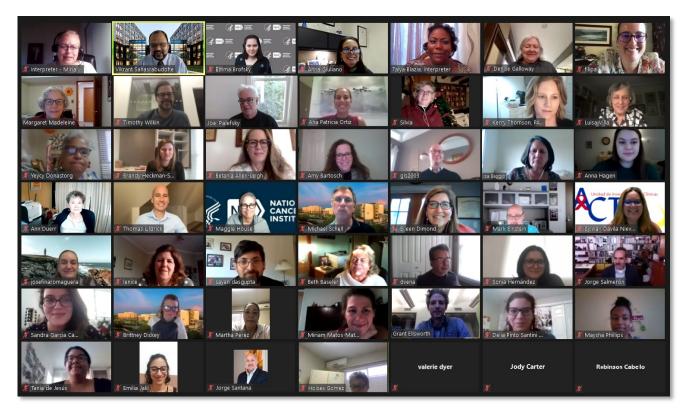


Figure 1. Scientific Focus Areas of ULACNet



ULACNet Principal Investigators and NCI Staff, October 2019



Attendees (>100) at the ULACNet (Virtual) Annual Meeting, December 2020

## Conclusion

ULACNet seeks to leverage established academic global health partnerships to conduct high quality collaborative clinical trials to inform clinical practice and ultimately reduce the burden of highly preventable HPV-related cancers in persons living with HIV worldwide.

## Acknowledgments

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